

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 9-12 were rejected as anticipated by DAVIS et al. 5,769,945 and claims 1-8 were rejected as anticipated by WAGNER et al. 5,904,164. The claims have been amended and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The claims have been amended to provide, among other features, that within the defined area, a surface of the gas guide facing the second surface is parallel to the second surface. This is shown, for example, in Figure 2 where surface 14 is parallel to the wafer. DAVIS et al. do not disclose this and thus claims 1-5 and 9-12 avoid the §102 rejection based on DAVIS et al. As shown in Figure 3 of DAVIS et al., the surface of the chuck opposite the lower peripheral edge of the wafer is not parallel to the lower surface of the wafer.

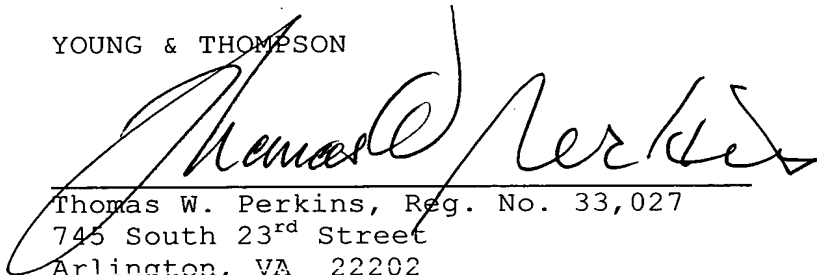
Claim 1 has been further amended to provide, among other features, that the gas guide is arranged to be separated from the first surface by a gap and to divert most of the gas away from the defined area, such as shown in Figure 3 where movement of the gas away from the defined area is indicated by arrow G2. WAGNER et al. do not disclose this and thus claims 1-8 avoid the §102 rejection based on WAGNER et al. As shown in Figure 3, WAGNER et al. makes no provision for the diversion of gas away from the lower surface of the wafer.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON



Thomas W. Perkins, Reg. No. 33,027
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

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